



Dave Edwards CEO of GSP released a video June 28 depicting plans for the airport's 2040 strategy, including 12 new boarding gates. (Rendering/Provided)

GSP plots out \$189.3M expansion by 2040

By Molly Hulsey
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The Greenville-Spartanburg International Airport may have seen a 51% drop in passengers this spring from March 2019, but airport leadership might call that a blip on the radar of a 20-year

development plan that triples the size of GSP.

Over the past 10 years, the airport has seen a 109% growth rate with six years and 27-months of record-breaking traffic before the COVID-19 pandemic descended on the Southeast. On June 28, the airport released an updated Terminal Area Study to outline what projects are in the wings for next two

decades if pre-pandemic growth rates pick up again.

"While the pandemic slowed us down a little bit, we continued work on that plan, because the Upstate is continuing to grow," GSP spokesperson Tom Tyra told GSA Busi-

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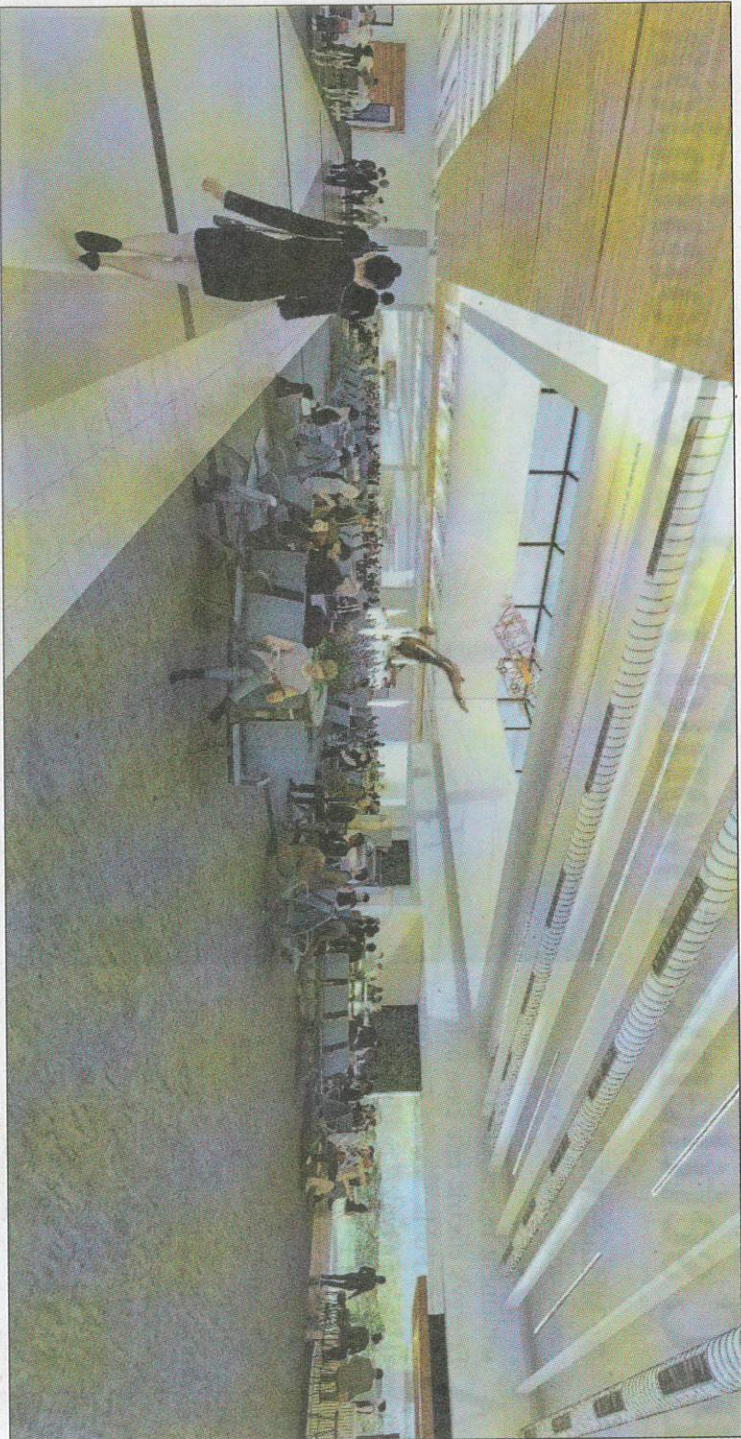
ness Report. "Even during the pandemic, we had companies locate here, people move here and so all of the fundamentals that drive air service demand are still there; we're just going to have to open up the country again and open up the world again."

Plan milestones include up to 12 additional boarding gates, an additional baggage claim, a new dedicated international arrivals terminal, a 1,500-space parking garage housing a rental car facility, wider roadways, an updated terminal curb front and a possible hotel.

The expected total cost for all five phases of construction would total around \$189.3 million in today's dollars and open up GSP for the capacity for 3.3 million boardings or 6.6 million passengers by 2040, Tyra said.

"As we build one project, it automatically fits into the next phase and the next phase," Tyra said. "So when we get down to 20 years from now, everything is in its place and we preserve where it's supposed to be, and it all makes sense no matter what level of passenger activity the airport will be handling at that time."

No construction will begin yet but development will be set into motion once the airport surpasses its 900,000 enplanement, or boarding, goal by the end of July 2021 to 1.1 million enplanements. Before the pandemic, GSP saw enplanements



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rise to 1.3 million annually. According to data from One Spartanburg Inc., about 150,000 passengers traveled through GSP this May, in stark contrast to the under-50,000 levels of the year before.

"And as we bring on new airlines and new services, we probably aren't too far off starting at least from the initial phases of this plan," Tyra said.

The strategy doesn't take into account ongoing cargo buildings and

campus development ventures within the airport's master plan submitted to the Federal Aviation Administration, including one project that includes a 50,000-square-foot cargo terminal slated to begin at the end of this year.

But with the airport's cargo and development components outpacing passenger traffic post-pandemic, they may play a critical role in raising the capital used to fund the 20-year passenger plan.

"It is important that we continue to

plan for growth at GSP," Edwards said in a news release. "We are dedicated to improving facilities in advance of demand, so that we continue to capitalize on opportunities as they are presented; to enhance the economic prosperity of the region. This plan allows us to look into the future and confidently plan for tomorrow." **CSA**

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